

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANAA 00188 251222Z

20

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4895

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD VIA POUCH

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCEUR

S E C R E T SANAA 0188

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, YE, SA, YS, EG, IZ

SUBJECT: MODERATE LEFTISH VIEW OF CURRENT INTERNAL SITUATION
IN YAR

1. TAIZ EMBOFF HAD CONVERSATION RECENTLY WITH ABDALLAH MU SA'ID

PROMINENT MODERATE LEFTIST PERSONALITY IN TAIZ. MUSA'ID IS
JOURNALIST WHO IS IN PROCESS OF REFLOATING NEWSPAPER IN
TAIZ WITH IRAQI BACKING. WE ARE REPORTING HIS VIEWS AS THEY
APPEAR TO BE INTELLIGENT REFLECTION OF REACTION OF MODERATE
LEFTIST ELEMENTS TO REMOVAL OF EX-PRIMIN AL-AYNI.

2. MUSA'ID DOES NOT SEE AMRI RETURN AS REFLECTING ANY DIFFERENCE
OF POLICY IN SAG BETWEEN PRINCES SULTAN AND FAHD, BUT AS STEP
WHICH HAS FULL BACKING OF SAG FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT AND
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SANAA 00188 251222Z

OF EGYPT. (HE UNDERSTANDS THAT ASHRAF MARWAN SAW

AMRI OFF AT CAIRO AIRPORT). ACCORDING MUSA'ID, SAUDIS HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT HAMDI COULD NOT HANDLE INTERNAL SITUATION AND WERE PARTICULARLY ALARMED AT BAATHI ADVANCES IN NOV AND DEC. THUS OBJECT OF RETURN WAS TO BLOCK IRAQ, NOT PDRY, AND SAUDIS WERE ABLE TO CONVINCE EGYPTIAN'S THAT REPRESSION IRAQI-SUPPORTED YAR BAATH WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT EGYPTIAN EFFORTS TO MODERATE ALI REGIME IN PDRY WHICH OQAS LITTLE AFFECTION FOR BAATH.

3. ACCORDING TO MUSA'ID MESSAGE INVITING AMRI TO SAUDI ARABIA TO PREPARE FOR RETURN TO YAR WAS SIGNED BY PRINCE FAHD AND YARG CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT AL-AHMAR. AHMAR, ACCORDING MUSA'ID, WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED BY LEFTIST STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN TAIZ IN NOVEMBER AND BY DANGER OF ARMED CLASH BETWEEN HAMDI AND ABU LUHUM ELEMENTS IN DEC (WE VIEWED CLASH AS NOT VERY LIELY IN VIEW PREPONDERANCE OF STRENGTH ON HAMDI'S SIDE.) INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS IRAQI BACKING FOR ABU LUHUMS CONVINCED AHMAR THAT HAMDI WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COPE WITH SITUATION AND CONVINCED SAG AND EGYPTIANS THAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO KEEP INTERNAL YAR SITUATION UNDER CONTROL.

4. RE PDRY REACTION, MUSA'ID ASSERTED THAT PDRY LEADERS HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY BRIEFED ON PLANS FOR AMRI'S RETURN AND WERE CONVINCED THAT STEP WAS AIMED AT IRAQ, SINCE YAR MILITARY WAS IN SUCH PARLOUS SHAPE THAT NOT EVEN RIGHT-WINGER SUCH AS AMRI COULD THREATEN PDRY. MUSA'ID STATED THAT PDRY FONMIN MUTI' HAD VISITED SANAA IN DEC AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IRAQI MEDDLING WAS MAKING AMRI'S RETURN INCREASINGLY LIKELY. ALTHOUGH PDRY NOT DELIGHTED WITH RETURN, LEADERS OF PRESIDENT ALI'S FACTPON HAVE SAID PRIVATELY THAT THEY UNDERSTAND REASONS FOR MOVE.

5. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE MUSA'ID'S ASSESSMENT IS ESSENTIALLY CORRECT, PARTICULARLY AS IT IDENTIFIES IRAQI ACTIVITY AS MAIN TARGET OF CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE. MUSA'ID CORRECTLY POINTS OUT THAT IRAQI-PDRY RELATIONS ARE COOL OVER LATTER'S TREATMENT OF LOCAL BAATHIS, FACTOR WHICH MITIGATES PDRY RESPONSE TO YAR SWING TO RIGHT. LATTER DEVELOPMENT, HOWEVER,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SANAA 00188 251222Z

IS POTENTIALLY AS HARMFUL TO PDRY-SUPPORTED ELEMENTS WHO ARE TACTICALLY ALLIED WITH BAATHIS IN YAR, SO THAT PDRY RESPONSE OVER MEDIUM TERM MAY NOT BE AS ACQUIESCENT AS MUSA'ID SUGGESTS.

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